

[p.24a]

243 While crops are small, posts are placed in the fields to provide perching places for hawks.

Worms may damage small plants to the point that reseeding is necessary, especially if there are long periods of cloudy weather without rain. Worms also damage about 35 percent of the ears. Deer damage crops badly only in isolated mountain fields. Badgers in some places are serious pests. The only remedy is to attempt to shoot the animals. Birds do little damage. Some maize is attacked by a fungus. The fungus is eaten, but it is not sold or prized as a delicacy as is the case in some parts of Mexico.

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243 Trespass by domestic animals and theft must be guarded against. Sometimes isolated fields are completely stripped if not watched. Stray animals caught damaging corn are taken to the *municipio* and held in jail until the owner pays for the damage.

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[132]

Unseasonal frost often damages corn, particularly late plantings and in fields at high altitudes. In 1940, frost, heavy enough to damage some fields, occurred on September 29.

When maize is about 1 foot high it is cultivated ("*escorda*" also "*trozando*") by running the plow between the rows, throwing dirt toward the plants. This is done a second time when the plants are about 18 inches tall. If it is delayed too long, the roots may be cut, the maize leaves will yellow at the tip, and no ears will form.

When the maize is in tassel, after the rainy season is well underway, the fields are weeded "*chaponeado*." This is done by hand with a short machete, called "*os*," with a sharp curve at the point. Also, earth is piled around such plants as were not sufficiently covered by the cultivation. If the weeds are bad, a second weeding is sometimes done, but not often. If weeding is omitted, weeds climb high up the stalks and the crop suffers considerably. The weeds removed are piled up beside the fields and are not used for feed or fertilizer.

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As soon as grain is well formed on the ears, some maize is used for food, usually roasted. At this time, also, guards must be set in the fields, not only to keep animals out, but to prevent theft. Whole families may move to temporary field shelters at this time and remain until the harvest. In the "plains," usually